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Directors of Veterinary Services in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: Arthur Olver, 1906-1908

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Abstract

Arthur Olver was born in 1875 the son of a Cornish farmer. He was elected Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in 1897. After two years in private practice he joined the Army Veterinary Service in 1899. In South Africa in 1901-1906, Olver served with the British cavalry in the Boer War, worked in Theiler's laboratory, was Senior Veterinary Officer in Natal and Assistant to the Principal Veterinary Officer, South Africa Command. Seconded to the Egyptian Army he was Principal Veterinary Officer (Director, Veterinary Services) in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1906-1908. He first reported several livestock diseases, pleaded for a civilian veterinary service and is credited with stamping out rinderpest in the Nile Valley, thus allowing freer cattle trade from Central Africa to Egypt. He was in England and South Africa in 1908-1914, mainly in administrative posts. At Headquarters, British Expeditionary Force in Europe during World War One, Olver went to the USA in 1917 to re-organize purchase and transport of Army remounts. He occupied administrative posts in England and Ireland after the war and was Assistant Director of Veterinary Services, Egypt Command, 1922-1927. Posted to India in 1928 Olver resigned his commission in 1930 to become Animal Husbandry Commissioner, Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. He unified husbandry and veterinary aspects of the livestock sector, set about improving local breeds, attempted to control disease (including rinderpest), organized breeders and instituted livestock shows. In 1939 he became Principal, Royal (Dick) Veterinary School. Retiring to a farm in 1946 he moved into suburbia in 1956 and died at the age of 86 in 1961. Olver was married and had three children. In addition to Boer and First World War campaign medals Olver received the Turkish Order of Osmanieh, was made a Companion of the Bath and of the Order of St Michael and St George and was knighted in 1937. Colonel Sir Arthur Olver, CB, CMG is best known for his organizational skills on three continents rather than for practical veterinary work.

Keywords

Rinderpest; Livestock disease; Animal health; Army veterinary services

Introduction

A religious uprising against the Sudan's Egyptian rulers took place in the final 20 years of the 19th Century. The uprising was defeated with considerable assistance from the British Army in 1898. The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was established as a Condominium shortly afterwards. Unrest by the native peoples continued for many years during which the country remained under military rule. Enormous numbers of cavalry and transport animals (horses, mules, donkeys and camels) were required to govern and control the still turbulent population. These required health care and a fledgling veterinary service staffed by officers of the British Army Veterinary Corps was established. A total of 12 people served as Principal Veterinary Officers (to 1910) or as Directors of Veterinary Services (from 1910 to 1956) in the 55-year period from the setting up of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1901 to the achievement of independence by the Republic of Sudan on 1 January 1956. All the early veterinary officers were military officers who were seconded, usually for short periods, from the British Army Veterinary Corps to the Egyptian Army which in turn employed them directly or seconded them to the Sudan. Arthur Olver was the third incumbent of the senior position in the Sudan veterinary service. He served only for two years during the period 1906-1908.

Early years

Arthur Olver was born at Trescowe on 4 August 1875, his birth being registered at Bodmin in the summer quarter of 1875 [1]¹. He was the fifth child and fifth son of Richard

¹Trescowe and its garden wall and railings to the south east front became a listed building on 4 November 1988 under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as Amended, for its special architectural or historic interest. Trescowe is probably early 17th Century with extensions from the 18th Century and additional remodelling from the mid 19th Century. For a full description see [2].

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Sobey Oliver, a successful Cornish farmer and livestock breeder, and his wife Mary (née Sobey). He was baptized on 8 October 1875 at the Parish Church of St Mabyn [3]. Arthur was 5 years old in 1881, living at Trescowe in St Mabyn with his parents, four older brothers, one younger sister, a cousin, and two female and two male servants. His father was a farmer employing eight men and three boys [4]. At this period he was at Harleigh House School in nearby Bodmin [5]². Aged 15 in 1891 Arthur was a Scholar, still with his parents at Trescowe but there were now only two older brothers in the household, together with his sister, two farm pupils, two female servants, a male servant and a middle aged single lady described as a Visitor [6]. (Figure1 and 2)

Having spent the requisite time in study Arthur graduated from Royal Veterinary College, London with Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine degree and was admitted to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons as MRCVS on 15 July 1897. Two years were spent in private practice [7] before Arthur Oliver was commissioned into the Army Veterinary Department on 8 March 1899 some months before the outbreak of the South African (Boer) War. An Army List has him in South Africa in 1900 [8] and at the Curragh in Ireland in 1901 [9].

The Boer War and South Africa, 1901-1906

On joining the Army Veterinary Department, Oliver was commissioned Lieutenant. He was a regular officer in South Africa from 21 January 1901 to 1 April 1906 [10], served with the cavalry and was Senior Veterinary Officer in Natal [11]. He was attached to the 3rd Dragoon Guards in Cape Colony, Orange River Colony (Orange Free State) from January to March 1902 and Transvaal from early March to 31 March 1902. He obtained the Queen's South Africa Medal, issued on 29 August 1902, with clasps for Cape Colony and Orange



Figure 1: South and southeast aspects of the birthplace of Arthur Oliver at Trescowe, St Mabyn, Cornwall



Figure 2: The Parish Church of St Mabyn and the font where Oliver was baptized

Free State [12]³. In 1904 he worked in the Daspoort Laboratory of Sir Arnold Theiler, Director of Veterinary Research in Transvaal from 1896 to 1910. While in South Africa Oliver was promoted to Captain on 8 March 1904 [13] and was Assistant to the Principal Veterinary Officer, Headquarters, South Africa Command from January 1904 to his departure for Sudan in 1906 [5] having been posted at some time to Mooi River [14-16].

Sudan, 1906-1908

Oliver was seconded to the Egyptian Army Veterinary Department on 2 April 1906 [17] and he took up the post of Principal Veterinary Officer (PVO) on his arrival in Sudan, the first of only two incumbents of the PVO/Director position throughout the Condominium period to have not previously served in the country. El Bimbashi A. Oliver was transferred from the Veterinary Department of the Egyptian Army to the Sudan Government to be in the Sudan Veterinary Department on 3 May 1907 [18]⁴. He was retransferred to the Egyptian Army on 26 October 1907 [19]⁵. He remained in Sudan as PVO until 31 October 1908 [21,22].

Piroplasmiasis was first reported as biliary fever in Sudan in the PVO's annual report [23]. A fuller account of piroplasmiasis was given a year later by the Wellcome Research Institute in the country [23]. Another first for the PVO was the plea for the creation of a Civil Veterinary Department which Captain Oliver made soon after his appointment as PVO [24]. Oliver pointed out the difficulties of effective disease control of meat and milk producing animals by military personnel who were already fully occupied with maintaining the health of cavalry and transport animals. He also underlined the lack of continuity owing to these officers being seconded to service in the Sudan for short periods. The proposal was that a permanent cadre of veterinary surgeons would not only be able to deal with rinderpest but also would be available to investigate the incidence of other diseases which, each year, were coming to light as the country was opened up. Trypanosomiasis, piroplasmiasis, epizootic lymphangitis and African horse sickness were among the diseases already reported. Remounts for the army were becoming difficult to obtain and Oliver urged that economies could be made by buying at least some of the needs locally. He suggested purchase of more government stallions and registration of mares in a scheme to improve the local horses. The Civil Veterinary Department did not materialise in Oliver's time in Sudan but he succeeded in doubling the number of civilian veterinary surgeons from one to two. It is also claimed that he stamped out rinderpest in the Nile Valley which allowed for the reorganization of the cattle trade between Central Africa, Sudan and Egypt on a satisfactory basis [25].

Largely for these services he was honoured with a Turkish decoration [26]:

The KING has been pleased to give and grant unto the undermentioned Officers His Majesty's Royal licence and authority to accept and wear Decorations (as stated against their respective names) which have been conferred upon them by His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, authorized by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan of Turkey in recognition of valuable services rendered by them:—

Fourth Class of the Imperial Ottoman Order of the Osmanieh.

Captain Arthur Oliver, Army Veterinary Corps.

United Kingdom and South Africa, 1908-1914

At the end of 1908 Oliver was appointed Deputy Assistant Director

²Harleigh House School was then a private boarding and day school for boys. After many changes of name and function it is still extant as Bodmin Academy. In [5, p.82] it is stated that he also attended Godolphin School, London. Other sources also state this. Godolphin is, and always has been, a private girls' school and Oliver could never have been there (Carole Heritage, Registrar, Godolphin School: personal communication, 12 April 2017).

³Several sources state Oliver had the Medal with five clasps [5, 7, 10] but I have been unable to find any additional clasps in official sources (National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; War Office Campaign Medal and Award Rolls 1793-1949 (WO 100); Class: WO 100; Piece: 112) Presumably he was eligible for the Transvaal, South Africa 1901 and South Africa 1902 clasps.

⁴Bimbashi was a rank in the Ottoman (and Egyptian) army equivalent to the British Army Lieutenant Colonel. Oliver was a Captain (two ranks below Lieutenant Colonel) in the Army Veterinary Corps whilst in Sudan. British officers serving with the Egyptian Army were usually ranked one grade higher than their substantive one.

⁵In [20] his name is spelt Oliver and he is still listed as being at Mooi River.

General of the Army Veterinary Service at the War Office [27-29]. In 1909 Captain Arthur Olver, Army Veterinary Corps was in the Department of the Quarter Master General within the Army Council [27]. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (FRCVS) by Examination in May 1909 [30]. In 1910 Captain A Olver was Deputy Assistant Director General, Army Veterinary Service, Ireland. In early April 1911 Olver was living as a Boarder in the household of Jane Simmons, a Boarding House Keeper, in a 15-room house at 85 Valley Drive Harrogate [31]: no reason has been found for his presence in Yorkshire at this time. He was based at Aldershot in 1912 [32]. Arthur Olver returned to South Africa for another tour of duty from 30 August 1913 to 9 September 1914 [10]. The Army List for 1914 states he was a Captain in the Ireland Veterinary Service at this time but was stationed (at Potchefstroom) in South Africa [33].

First World War, 1914-1919

Captain Arthur Olver, Royal Army Veterinary Corps was promoted to major on 8 March 1914 [34], evidently during the period he was in South Africa. Probably in late September or early October in 1914 he married Marjorie Beart, born in Natal, South Africa on 22 June 1894 [35]. It is possible that Marjorie travelled back with Olver from South Africa in September. She was 20 years old and almost 19 years younger than he. Olver was posted to France on 29 October 1914 to join the British Expeditionary Force and was Assistant to the PVO at the headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force from August 1915 to May 1917 [5] although the Army List has him at Potchefstroom in 1915 [36].

In a Despatch to the War Office dated 14 January 1915, Field Marshall J. D. P. French, Commanding-in-Chief, The British Army in France had "the honour to bring to notice the names of those whom I recommend for gallant and distinguished service in the field", a list of several thousand men and women from all branches of the armed forces amongst whom was Olver, Major A., F.R.C.V.S (i.e. a Mention in Despatches) [37]. In a virtually identical Despatch dated 30 November 1915, French, still Commanding-in-Chief, had "the honour to bring to notice the names of those whom I recommend for gallant and distinguished service in the field", a again a huge list of thousands of men and women amongst whom was Olver, Major A., F.R.C.V.S (i.e. a Mention in Despatches) [38]. On 11 January 1916 it was announced that Major Arthur Olver, F.R.C.V.S., Army Veterinary Corps (along with hundreds of others) that [39,40]:

The King has been graciously pleased to give directions for the following promotions in and appointments to the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George for services rendered in connection with Military Operations in the Field to be dated the 1st January 1916:- To be an Additional Member of the Third Class or Companions of the said Most Distinguished Order.

Marjorie Olver, aged 24 (she was in fact not yet 22), left Plymouth on 11 February 1916 on board the Kenilworth Castle travelling First Class to Capetown [41]. This was the first of many sea voyages she was to make as Olver's wife over the next 40 years. She returned to England soon after her arrival in South Africa as her first son Peter B Olver was born in London towards the end of 1916 [42].

Olver was promoted to Acting Lieutenant Colonel on 1 July 1917 [43]. Major (Acting Lieutenant Colonel) A Olver on the Staff of Field Marshall Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief, The British Armies in France was among several hundred soldiers "whose distinguished and gallant services and devotion to duty" during service between 26 February and midnight on 20/21 September 1917 whom Haig considered deserving of special mention (i.e. Mentioned in Despatches) [44].⁶ He was promoted from Acting to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel on 1 January 1918 [46] and then Acting Colonel from 18 September 1918 whilst holding the appointment of Deputy Director

of Veterinary Services [47]. Olver reverted to substantive Major and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel on ceasing to hold the Deputy Director appointment on 16 May 1919 [48]. In the meantime on 1 January 1919 [49]:

: The KING [was] graciously pleased to give orders for the following promotions in, and appointments to, the Most Honourable Order of the Bath for services in connection with the War: ---

To be Additional Members of the Military Division of the Third Class, or Companions, of the said Most Honourable Order: ---

Maj. and Bt. Lt.-Col. (A./Lt.-Col.) Arthur Olver, C.M.G., F.R.C.V.S., R.A.V.C.

Olver was not, however, in England when he was awarded the C.B. He was in Canada and the United States of America as Principal Veterinary Officer – acceding to this post on 1 July 1917, having arrived in Canada on 27 June – of the British Remount Commission of the War Mission to the United States [5]. The particular remit of the Remount Commission, which was based in Montreal in Canada, was to re-organize the veterinary arrangements in an attempt to reduce the incidence of the horse diseases that were creating havoc in the arrangements for purchase and shipping. At this time Olver was a member of two private (and up-market!) London Clubs: the East India United Service Club and St James Club⁷. Olver was followed to Canada and the USA by his wife Marjorie. She landed at Montreal from the SS Scandinavia on 12 October 1917 and applied to cross from Canada to the USA at St Albans Vermont: she was aged 26 (in fact 23), had never been to the USA before, was in possession of US\$50, was in good health and was 5ft 8½ inches tall with brown hair and blue eyes [50]. Marjorie underwent pre-examination in Montreal as an alien on 7 September 1918 before being allowed into the USA [51].

In addition to being admitted to the two noble orders, Olver was entitled to World War I campaign medals (Figure 3). He just qualified for the 1914 Star (as opposed to the lesser regarded 1914-1915 Star) as he had arrived in France on 29 October with the cut-off date being midnight on 22-23 November: a clasp was awarded with this medal to those who had served under fire or who had operated within range of enemy mobile artillery in France or Belgium during the period 5 August to 22 November 1914 but it is not known if he qualified for this. He also received the British War Medal and Victory Medal. On the latter he was entitled to wear an Oak Leaf clasp for being mentioned in Despatches. His Medal Index Card indicates that the final authorization for these awards was dated 2 November 1920 (Figure 4).

Postwar, 1920-1928

Olver left the USA in late March 1919 and arrived at Liverpool travelling First Class from New York on 1 April 1919. He was 43 years old, his last permanent residence had been Canada and he was going to 29 Howard Court, West Hampstead, London [52]. Marjorie had presumably travelled back to England before him because on 13 June 1919 she gave birth to a second son, Arthur Shane Beart Olver [53]. A third son Brian S B Olver was born on 28 December 1920 [54] but whatever joy this brought would have been tempered by the death of the first son Peter B Olver, aged 5, towards the end of 1921 [55]. Third son Brian S B Olver was also not long for the world as he died aged 7 on 20 September 1928 [56]. This second death occurred in rural Wiltshire where Brian Sobe Beart Olver is buried in St Mary's churchyard, Winterbourne Gunner [57]: as for Arthur Olver's presence in Harrogate in 1911 a connection with Wiltshire has not been established although it is possible that he was based for a short time at Porton South Camp which was the Army Chemical Warfare School at the time of Brian's death, after his return from Egypt and before his departure for India (Figure 5).

⁶Several sources state that Olver was Mentioned in Despatches four times but I have found only three and only three are listed in an Army List for 1919 [45].

⁷The former was founded in 1848 to meet the needs of the various services that administered the Indian Government but later many officers of the home forces were admitted as members. The latter was a London gentlemen's club that operated between 1857 and 1978 and whose members were mainly diplomats and artists – Olver may have been a member because of his "diplomatic" status with the War Commission.



Figure 3: Honours and campaign medals of Sir Arthur Oliver, C.B. C.M.G. (Left to right and top to bottom: Knight Bachelor; Imperial Ottoman Order of the Osmanieh, Fourth Class; Military Division of the Third Class, or Companions, of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath; Third Class or Companions of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Queen's South Africa Medal; British War Medal 1914-1919; 1914 Star (with clasp for service under fire); Allied Victory Medal (with clasp of Oak Leaves for Mention in Despatches)

Name		Rank	Reg. No.	Medal	Roll	Page
(A) OLYVER	A.V.C.	Major		VICTORY	1914-1918	2
(B) A		Lt Col		BRITISH	1914-1918	2

Action taken: 1916. 1917. 1918. 1919. 1920. 1921. 1922. 1923. 1924. 1925. 1926. 1927. 1928. 1929. 1930. 1931. 1932. 1933. 1934. 1935. 1936. 1937. 1938. 1939. 1940. 1941. 1942. 1943. 1944. 1945. 1946. 1947. 1948. 1949. 1950. 1951. 1952. 1953. 1954. 1955. 1956. 1957. 1958. 1959. 1960. 1961. 1962. 1963. 1964. 1965. 1966. 1967. 1968. 1969. 1970. 1971. 1972. 1973. 1974. 1975. 1976. 1977. 1978. 1979. 1980. 1981. 1982. 1983. 1984. 1985. 1986. 1987. 1988. 1989. 1990. 1991. 1992. 1993. 1994. 1995. 1996. 1997. 1998. 1999. 2000. 2001. 2002. 2003. 2004. 2005. 2006. 2007. 2008. 2009. 2010. 2011. 2012. 2013. 2014. 2015. 2016. 2017. 2018. 2019. 2020. 2021. 2022. 2023. 2024. 2025. 2026. 2027. 2028. 2029. 2030. 2031. 2032. 2033. 2034. 2035. 2036. 2037. 2038. 2039. 2040. 2041. 2042. 2043. 2044. 2045. 2046. 2047. 2048. 2049. 2050. 2051. 2052. 2053. 2054. 2055. 2056. 2057. 2058. 2059. 2060. 2061. 2062. 2063. 2064. 2065. 2066. 2067. 2068. 2069. 2070. 2071. 2072. 2073. 2074. 2075. 2076. 2077. 2078. 2079. 2080. 2081. 2082. 2083. 2084. 2085. 2086. 2087. 2088. 2089. 2090. 2091. 2092. 2093. 2094. 2095. 2096. 2097. 2098. 2099. 2100. 2101. 2102. 2103. 2104. 2105. 2106. 2107. 2108. 2109. 2110. 2111. 2112. 2113. 2114. 2115. 2116. 2117. 2118. 2119. 2120. 2121. 2122. 2123. 2124. 2125. 2126. 2127. 2128. 2129. 2130. 2131. 2132. 2133. 2134. 2135. 2136. 2137. 2138. 2139. 2140. 2141. 2142. 2143. 2144. 2145. 2146. 2147. 2148. 2149. 2150. 2151. 2152. 2153. 2154. 2155. 2156. 2157. 2158. 2159. 2160. 2161. 2162. 2163. 2164. 2165. 2166. 2167. 2168. 2169. 2170. 2171. 2172. 2173. 2174. 2175. 2176. 2177. 2178. 2179. 2180. 2181. 2182. 2183. 2184. 2185. 2186. 2187. 2188. 2189. 2190. 2191. 2192. 2193. 2194. 2195. 2196. 2197. 2198. 2199. 2200. 2201. 2202. 2203. 2204. 2205. 2206. 2207. 2208. 2209. 2210. 2211. 2212. 2213. 2214. 2215. 2216. 2217. 2218. 2219. 2220. 2221. 2222. 2223. 2224. 2225. 2226. 2227. 2228. 2229. 2230. 2231. 2232. 2233. 2234. 2235. 2236. 2237. 2238. 2239. 2240. 2241. 2242. 2243. 2244. 2245. 2246. 2247. 2248. 2249. 2250. 2251. 2252. 2253. 2254. 2255. 2256. 2257. 2258. 2259. 2260. 2261. 2262. 2263. 2264. 2265. 2266. 2267. 2268. 2269. 2270. 2271. 2272. 2273. 2274. 2275. 2276. 2277. 2278. 2279. 2280. 2281. 2282. 2283. 2284. 2285. 2286. 2287. 2288. 2289. 2290. 2291. 2292. 2293. 2294. 2295. 2296. 2297. 2298. 2299. 2300. 2301. 2302. 2303. 2304. 2305. 2306. 2307. 2308. 2309. 2310. 2311. 2312. 2313. 2314. 2315. 2316. 2317. 2318. 2319. 2320. 2321. 2322. 2323. 2324. 2325. 2326. 2327. 2328. 2329. 2330. 2331. 2332. 2333. 2334. 2335. 2336. 2337. 2338. 2339. 2340. 2341. 2342. 2343. 2344. 2345. 2346. 2347. 2348. 2349. 2350. 2351. 2352. 2353. 2354. 2355. 2356. 2357. 2358. 2359. 2360. 2361. 2362. 2363. 2364. 2365. 2366. 2367. 2368. 2369. 2370. 2371. 2372. 2373. 2374. 2375. 2376. 2377. 2378. 2379. 2380. 2381. 2382. 2383. 2384. 2385. 2386. 2387. 2388. 2389. 2390. 2391. 2392. 2393. 2394. 2395. 2396. 2397. 2398. 2399. 2400. 2401. 2402. 2403. 2404. 2405. 2406. 2407. 2408. 2409. 2410. 2411. 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located at a central (and no doubt comfortable as it is situated at 2700 metres altitude) station of the Imperial Veterinary Research Institute at Mukteswar⁹. He was one of the first persons to recognize that livestock development would come from owners and not research stations and that the use of foreign breeds was largely unnecessary. The "livestock" research staff were organised into Pathology and Bacteriology, Serology and Veterinary Zoology. New appointments included researchers in biochemistry, helminthology and protozoology. Two more bacteriologists were subsequently appointed to deal with tuberculosis and Johne's disease, and brucellosis. In 1931 a schistosome was identified as the cause of nasal granuloma in working cattle. It was also established that blindness in calves at the Quetta Military Dairy Farm was due to a Vitamin A deficiency in the diet of the dam. Rinderpest was, of course, not forgotten and by 1934 goat spleen vaccine alone was the routine method of protection other than in newly imported European cattle. The search for an even better protective agent continued, however, at the centre as well as at provincial centres in Nagpur, Lucknow and Calcutta. The new vaccine made a valuable contribution to the control of rinderpest and the proportion of losses from rinderpest to total losses from contagious disease dropped from 70 per cent in 1932-1933 to 49 per cent in 1937-1938 [78].

Early in Oliver's incumbency, veterinary education was extended when the Patna Veterinary College opened with a 3-year course in 1930. There were then five 3-year veterinary teaching institutes in India, this complement being considered sufficient to supply replacements to a total veterinary staff of about 2500. Now, however, the need for an expanded curriculum and university status was being felt. The Punjab Veterinary College was first to introduce a 4-year course, followed by Madras which became the first Indian veterinary school to gain recognition from the local university. In 1936 Madras Veterinary College introduced a B.V.Sc. degree and this was followed by the other teaching institutions [78].

A major contribution to livestock improvement was the establishment at Headquarters of an Animal Husbandry Bureau. Its remit was to organise milk recording, collect data for the setting up of herd books for dairy breeds and collect and disseminate information on India's animal industries, of which the most important were hides and skins and wool. There were still concerns regarding the lack of animal husbandry organisations in the provinces but some of these did make an effort. In the Punjab, for example, six farms had been established with financial aid from the Government to increase the number of stud bulls. The output of these, together with those available from the Hissar cattle farm, made an appreciable contribution to meeting the demand from the Province as a whole. The registration of suitable animals for stud work was introduced in Bombay and this province enacted a Livestock Improvement Act under which bulls in scheduled areas not registered for breeding could be castrated [78].

In the zoology section at Mukteswar many parasites were recorded for the first time with special attention given to conditions caused by filaria such as ophthalmia, *Lichen tropicus* in horses and hump sore (stephanofilariasis) in cattle. Research in the Punjab on the warble fly was later extended by the appointment to Mukteswar in 1936 of a specialist to investigate the various species of fly affecting cattle and goats and to devise control methods [78].

Nutrition also received more attention and in addition to the Physiological Chemists' section at Bangalore there were smaller units at Coimbatore in the Madras Presidency, Dacca in Bengal and Lyallpur in the Punjab¹⁰. Some work on the mineral content of grasses was carried out by the biochemist at Mukteswar. These early investigations showed that in many parts of India the normal diet was deficient in several respects. Phosphorus deficiency was identified in Bengal, Madras and the hilly tracts of the country. Rice straw – the staple diet of cattle in all the irrigated areas – was proved to be a non-maintenance ration when fed alone. Feeds such as bajra (*Pennisetum typhoideum*) and guara (*Cyamopsis psoraloides*) that were grown extensively in the dry areas did, on the other hand, constitute a maintenance diet [78].

Arthur Oliver crossed from Canada into the United States at St Albans, Vermont, having arrived on 24 September 1935 at Victoria, British Columbia from Shanghai aboard the Empress of Japan which he had boarded on 2 September. He was described as a Government Advisor, aged 60, and was a non-immigrant issued with a visa on 4 September. He was accompanied by Arthur Shane Oliver aged 16 and a Student. The last permanent address of both parties was Delhi, India. Oliver was to visit the Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry in Washington DC. He was 6ft 1½ inches tall with a dark complexion, brown hair and grey eyes [79].

On 17 October 1935 Arthur Oliver aged 60 and an Expert Adviser to the Government of India (last permanent address, India) arrived at Southampton on board the Empress of Britain of the Canadian Pacific Line having travelled from Quebec in Tourist Class. His intended address was c/o Glyn Mills and Co, Kirkland House, Whitehall, London SW. He was accompanied by his son Arthur S B Oliver, a Scholar aged 16, who was bound for Laxton House, Oundle, Peterborough [80].¹¹ On 26 September 1936 Marjorie Oliver, of Hill House, Ankeston, near Newport, Essex and aged 42, boarded the SS Viceroy of India and travelled First Class to Bombay [81]. No specific reason for Oliver's trip to the USA has been found.

On 11 May 1937 [82,83]:

The KING [was] graciously pleased, on the occasion of His Majesty's Coronation, to signify his intention of conferring the Honour of Knighthood upon the following:-- Colonel Arthur Oliver, C.B., C.M.G., F.R.C.V.S., F.N.L., Royal Army Veterinary Corps (retired), Expert Adviser in Animal Husbandry to the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research.

One month later on 11 June 1937 [84]:

The KING was pleased, on Friday, [...], at Buckingham Palace, to confer the honour of Knighthood upon the under mentioned gentlemen:— Colonel Arthur Oliver, C.B., C.M.G., F.R.C.V.S., F.N.L.¹²

The Marquess of Linlithgow became Viceroy in 1936. This provided the veterinary services with the attention they had long been requesting¹³. Linlithgow's commitment to agriculture is exemplified in two of his aphorisms: 'the cow and the working bullock carry on their patient backs the whole structure of Indian agriculture' and 'I am aware of no other single contribution which it lies within our power to make towards the enhancement of the agricultural wealth of this country, which is in any degree comparable with the general improvement of livestock'. The veterinary staff was at last able to submit proposals for the integration of all aspects of livestock improvement into one

⁹The Empress Club, founded in Dover Street in 1897, was one of a handful of such establishments that catered solely for women and was named for the Queen-Empress herself. It boasted two drawing rooms, offering a choice between the Louis Quinze or the Venetian style, a dining room, a lounge, a smoking gallery and a smoking room, a library, a writing room, a tape machine for news, a telephone and a staircase decorated with stained glass windows depicting Shakespeare's heroines.

⁹A regional campus of the (now) Indian Veterinary Research Institute under the Indian Council for Agricultural Research is still located at Mukteswar.

¹⁰Dacca is now the capital of the independent country of Bangladesh.

¹¹The boy would have been going to Oundle School, a Public School established in 1556, where he would have been a boarder. At the time Oundle would have been a school for boys only but is now co-educational. Laxton House still exists but is now for day pupils as opposed to boarding pupils. In the British educational system a "Public School" is in fact a fee-paying private establishment.

¹²F.N.L. as a post-nominal has not been identified and this is the only occasion on which these letters appear after Oliver's name. It was also attached to the name of F Ware who was subsequently Animal Husbandry Commissioner and who wrote a second book on the cattle and buffalo breeds of India [85].

comprehensive organization along the lines successfully developed by Sir Arnold Theiler at Onderstepoort in South Africa [78].

The First All India Cattle Show was held in Delhi in 1938. Some 23 cattle and buffalo breeds were exhibited. Oliver, as Animal Husbandry Commissioner, as Chairman of the organizing committee was heartily congratulated on the Show's success [78]. On the show's second day there was a parade of all exhibits where the Viceroy was a distinguished spectator. A commentary given over the loudspeaker by Col. Sir Arthur Oliver described the origin, home, characteristics, utility, excellence, defects, etc. of each breed [86]. The Section on Veterinary Research at the 25th annual meeting of the Indian Science Congress Association which, to mark the silver jubilee of the Association, was a joint session with the British Association, was held in Calcutta on 3-9 January 1938. Sir Arthur Oliver, Animal Husbandry Expert, Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi was President of the Section on Veterinary Research [87, 88]. In his presidential address at this meeting Oliver discussed "The Development of Veterinary Work in India" and gave a detailed history of the early pioneers in Indian veterinary science and the great efforts they made to lay down the foundation upon which the present structure had been built [89]. Colonel Oliver was clearly a busy man in the final months of his tenure in India and in addition to all his other work he visited Kabul in Afghanistan and made a report to the higher authorities [90].

Towards the end of his tenure in India Oliver wrote a treatise on Indian cattle breeds [91]. A later publication in a collective work dealt with livestock improvement [92]. In addition to these and throughout his tenure he produced a series of papers in local (and undoubtedly not peer-reviewed) journals as well as numerous reports [93-96]. These papers covered milk yields of Indian and foreign cattle breeds, cross breeding and the social and economic importance of cattle (Figure 6).

A paper by Oliver and Vaidyanathan (a statistician who was on the staff of the Agricultural Research Council) at the first annual meeting of the newly constituted Animal Husbandry Section of the Board of Agriculture entitled "An Assessment of the Annual Contribution of Livestock in India to the Indian Economy" caused a sensation. Excluding pigs and poultry -- industries which at that time were insufficiently organised to allow of their analysis -- but including the output of draught animals, the economic contribution of nearly £1,500 million per annum to India's finances was greater than the estimated value of crops. This revelation caused surprise and consternation at the time and went far to convince higher authorities that better provision for the care and development of India's livestock



Figure 6: Oliver's book about the cattle breeds of India

-- which veterinary officials from the early nineteenth century had been demanding -- was deserving of very serious consideration [78].

Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh, 1938-1945

Oliver left India in 1938 to take up the post of Principal of the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College in Edinburgh. He remained at the Dick for more than six years and was its chief executive through the difficult years of the Second World War.

During August 1938 he attended the First Imperial Veterinary Congress held at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. He did not present a paper but made two interventions. Sir Arthur Oliver concurred with some other participants that active immunization against virus diseases should not be recommended and then went on to discuss rinderpest control in India. With reference to mastitis in cattle he said that in India attempts were being made to breed out the wrong type of udder [97]. In March 1939, as Principal of the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh, Sir Arthur was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (FRSE) [98]. During his tenure at Edinburgh he was also a Council Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [99].

It seems Oliver did not do much that was worthy of note whilst at Edinburgh -- students enrolled in the Home Guard and undertook air raid duties and the college also housed several Polish pupils -- and his time there "passed without comment" although his firmness of character "may not have been much appreciated by the students" [74].

Later years, 1946-1961

Sir Arthur Oliver retired from public service in 1946. He had, however, obviously been planning for this change for very many years. This is underlined by the fact that Lady Marjorie Oliver, whose age was not given, arrived at Liverpool from Durban, having travelled First Class on board the SS Ulysses on 5 July 1938. Her intended next address was to be Patmore Heath Lodge, Albury, Hertfordshire [100]¹⁴. In 1938 also Arthur Oliver was listed in the local directory at Patmore Heath Farm with telephone number Albury 209 [101]. Over the next few years, whilst still at the Royal (Dick) in Edinburgh, Oliver was listed in the local telephone directory at several addresses on his Patmore "estate" including Patmore Lodge, Penrose Cottage and Penrose House with telephone numbers including Albury 207 and Albury 255. It seems probable that Lady Oliver had to move house because the farm was being lived in by a tenant but she clearly worked towards occupying the "big house" in this period. Throughout the period 1938 to 1946 Oliver's description in telephone directories varied from plain Colonel through Sir to Colonel Sir, with or without the post-nominals CB and CMG (Figure 7).

Oliver retired definitively to his estate in 1946 "to farm with the enthusiasm and zest with which he had pursued all his undertakings". It is also recorded he excelled at field sports (presumably hunting, shooting and fishing). He was greatly amused by a critic predicting a promising career for the artist when two of his paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy [11].

Oliver continued to be listed at his Albury telephone until 1955. He must have then retired from farming as he is next given in 1957 as Colonel Sir Arthur Oliver CB CMG living at 7 The Avenue, Summersdale, Chichester with telephone number Chichester 7191. Colonel Sir Arthur Oliver, C.B. C.M.G., died aged 86 on 15 August 1961 [102] at St Paul's Hospital, Holborn, of a complex of myocardial infarction

¹³Victor Alexander John Hope, 2nd Marquess of Linlithgow, KG, KT, FRSE, GCSI, GCIE, OBE (24 September 1887-5 January 1952) was a Scottish Unionist politician, agriculturalist and colonial administrator. He was Governor-General and Viceroy of India from 18 April 1936 to 1 October 1943. He was also Vice President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh and Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

¹⁴Patmore Lodge was listed Grade II on 14 January 1985 under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as Amended for its special architectural or historic interest. It is described as "an 18th Century two storey building of brick and plaster with a central chimney stack under a tiled roof, the windows being double hung sashes of 18th and 19th Centuries with a central timber framed doorway and a tiled verandah. Later additions to rear". Patmore Heath (7.6 ha) is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), notified in 1985 under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, for its large amount of dry grass and marshy areas: the turf is dominated by *Deschampsia cespitosa* (Tufted Hair Grass) and *Anthoxanthum odoratum* (Sweet Vernal Grass which in the days before intensification gave hay its beautiful aroma). In 2017 Penrose House is the registered office of an estate agency (real estate company).



Figure 7: The Olver "estate" at Patmore Heath in Hertfordshire

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 8439320-2

REGISTRATION DISTRICT: Holborn

1961 DEATH in the Sub-district of Holborn in the Metropolitan Borough of Holborn

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
373	19th Aug 1961 St Pauls Hospital Endell Street Holtborn	Arthur OLVER	Male	80	Major	Myocardial infarction + arteriosclerosis Chronic bronchitis Benign prostatic hypertrophy Corticoid by J.H. 15 July 1961 Mch	A.S.B. Olver Son "Wisswood" Wellcome Road Hanley, Surrey	19th Aug 1961	H.A. Alley Cooper Registrar

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 24th day of July 2017

DYE 196956

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. ©CROWN COPYRIGHT

WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

See note overleaf

DAW

Figure 8: Official death certificate of Arthur Olver with extensive notation of his life history

(that is, a heart attack) and arteriosclerosis, chronic bronchitis and benign prostatic hypertrophy¹⁵. Two eulogic obituaries provided brief resumés of his life whilst stressing that the world had lost one of its most eminent authorities on livestock development [11,104].

This was not, however, the end, as Olver's name and the address at 7 The Avenue, Summersdale, Chichester persisted in the local telephone directory through to 1971. This continuation was obviously maintained by Lady Olver who always had him entitled as Col Sir Arthur Olver CB CMG and who ensured (through her son A S B Olver who informed the Registrar of the death) that all these facts and a notation that he was a Colonel in the RAVC plus the fact that he had been Principal of the Royal Veterinary College in Edinburgh

was entered on his death certificate (Figure 8). The listing came to an end in 1973 with the death, of bronchopneumonia and carcinoma of the stomach at King Edward VII Hospital, Eastbourne, on 9 December 1973 of Lady Marjorie Olver of Summersdale, Chichester [105]. She had property in the form of stocks and shares in South Africa and the USA [106] but probate of her effects of £34 445 was granted at Winchester on 20 March 1974 [107].

¹⁵At its founding in 1898 St Paul's Hospital for Skin and Genito-Urinary Diseases provided treatment primarily for venereal disease (or 'cognate diseases' as coyly named by its founding fathers). The new drug Salvarsan for treating syphilis was tested in 1913. In 1927 the Hospital became St Paul's Hospital for Diseases (including Cancer) of the Genito-Urinary Organs and Skin. After several amalgamations it finally closed in 1992 [103].

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